

Philipps District of Jaffna Ceylon March 7th 1817

Beloved friend & brothers.

It will afford you no little satisfaction to learn, that I with my missionary friends have arrived on missionary grounds. Thus far, you have, I doubt not, followed us with your prayers. And thus far God has answered prayer in our behalf. Surely we may all say, goodness & mercy have followed us all the way. Every circumstance has turned out for the furtherance of our pleasant settlement among the heathen. I begin to realize more, than I ever could before what it is to be a missionary ~~among~~ to the heathen. For four months past, I have been surrounded constantly by the worshippers of idols. Such, with the exception of my fellow labourers, constitute the society in which I reside. And when I except a few kind friends in the fort & town of Jaffna-patnam, nine, or ten, miles distant from us, & D.Bast Esq. a pious magistrate of Dutch extraction, about two miles distant, with whom we have occasional interviews, our only associates, out of our little circle, are heathens. We have found here a few very valuable friends. Among the number are the Rev^r S.Glenie, colonial chaplain of this district, who is a frank, generous hearted man, exceedingly friendly to us, & our success here. He is now in our house with his wife & five little lively children, being driven here, by an ~~severe~~ & untiring storm of rains, from a thatched house (or bungalow) upon the sea shore ~~at~~ ~~near~~ ~~the~~ ~~coast~~ ~~neglectfully~~ where he was residing a few months for the health of his family. J.W. Mooyart Esq. a magistrate & fiscal ^{Sheriff} of this district. He is a man of warm piety. His whole soul is engaged in the good work of missions. His property too. His wife is the daughter of the late Doctor John, missionary at Trincomalee. I spent almost three months in their family when I first came on to Jaffna; & was treated with the most marked kindness. Dr. Stowell resided in this family when in this district. He was then unmarried & not pious. Besides these we have the friendship of several civil & military men & our Wesleyan missionary brethren Revs. Mr. & Mrs. Lynch, Square, & Carter, three very pious excellent men whose hearts are deeply engaged for the salvation of the heathen. We live on the most friendly terms, & have many pleasant meetings together. Mr. Lynch is now on a visit to the coast; & Madras, in particular, where their society intend if possible to establish a mission. Mr. S. is unable to labour, & I fear is declining in consumption. Mr. C. is the only acting missionary in this district, except ourselves. For all these favours, you will unite with us in rendering thanksgiving to him who is the dispenser of every blessing.

God, my brother, has been pleased to make a very wide difference between our highly favoured nation & this degraded people. We are indeed exalted to heaven in point of privilege; while this people are sunk to the lowest state of degradation. Nothing would reconcile me to continue among them, but a hope of improving their temporal & spiritual condition. ~~etc~~ to accomplish this my encouragement is derived solely from the free & rich mercy of Christ, our compassionate Lord & Redeemer. He can cause his word to spring up even here & make this desolate wilderness blossom like the rose, & become the garden of the Lord. This he will do in his own time, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Supported by this hope I am happy in my situation, in my work. I would not, with my present feelings, exchange this for my native land, as much as I love it, & these beloved friends whom I left behind me there. But when I make this remark I would wish to remember, that the heart is deceitful above all things & desperately wicked. I am forcibly taught by the example of those who have gone before me that we cannot tell what a day or an hour may bring.

The district is one extended plain. There is scarcely a rise of ground in it worthy to be called a hill - so that in the rainy or winter season (called here) a considerable portion of the land is for a short time under water. It is of course famous for the cultivation of rice. The scenery in different parts of this district is truly beautiful. The whole district has the traces of a far higher state of cultivation than at the present time. It is populous, but not so much so, as has been generally stated. The present population is estimated by the best judges here to be less than 100,000. A famine & pestilence which raged here years since swept off a vast number of the inhabitants. Many poor natives slumped down dead in the streets of Jaffna with hunger, & the inhabitants had no possible means to relieve them - I believe this part of the district (the N.W.) where we reside, is the most populous. The people are constantly passing our house - sometimes 100. or 200. Fishermen with their nets & baskets, & market people with enormous loads on their heads - the way they usually carry all their burdens. The appearance of the people as they pass is often ludicrous & disgusting - but such generally ~~as~~ as to excite pity & compassion. The people here are notorious for lying - so much so that they often lie when the truth would serve their present purpose better. They consider this no crime, & show not the least symptom of shame if they are detected. If we have any dealings with them, they always promise to do what they think will please us, without any intention of performing it, & we never expect them to do so, unless it is evidently for their interest. When we converse with them on the Chr. religion they usually confess that this religion is far superior to their own; & yet the next hour I bow down to their idols. I speak of the great body of the people. There are a few who come forward in defence of their idol religion & oppose the Chr. - the poor people which are here as the principal part of the inhabitants are filthy in the extreme. Their clothes & their bodies (the latter of which is almost wholly the object of sight) appear as tho' they were never washed. Their seat is always the ground & they prefer the sand & dirt to the clean grass. They are tenacious of cast, & they will starve before they will do any thing which they are accustomed to consider contrary to it. In one family we are obliged to keep servants of different castes. It is for the interest of the Brahmin priests to keep the people in ignorance; & when we converse with them alone they honestly confess that they should lose their support if they did not do so. They make the common people believe that their idol gods eat the rice & fruit which they are required to offer in the temples & that the silver & gold which they bring is employed to make images & ornaments that are placed to the gods, while they pocket it up & make use of a base metal for this purpose. The dress of the people here is very simple - With those who are in easy circumstances as to property, two or three pieces of cloth of three yds. each constitute the dress. They never use needle or pin in their dress - one piece of cloth is wound round the waist & hangs down to the knee or below. One piece is wound round the head & the third if they have it, wound round the waist like a girdle, or thrown loosely over the shoulder to spread over them in cold weather or at night - The poor among the men have not even a quarter of a yd. of cloth about them. The children of these people have no covering, till they are four or five years old. The women dress according to their cast & property. Those of high cast & good property are very seldom seen, except on their festival days. If you go to the houses of the rich we ~~can~~ see the wives & daughters only in make a partition ^{here required}

Our most pleasing labours are among the youth. We have a school inter-
esting school of native boys from seven to fifteen years of age. Some of them
can read English with some fluency, & I believe all of them make as rapid
progress in acquiring this language as I have ever seen boys do, with the same
advantages, in America. All of them except a few of the small boys who had
never attended a native school, before we came, read their own language with
great ease. We have at present between thirty & forty under our instruction.
Many of them have committed many texts of S.S. which were written on the old
leaf. the ten commandments - our Lord's prayer. & are now committing Halle's
catechism for children, which we get translated into Malabar, their own
language, for them. They commit with much ease. They have retention
memories, for they repeat now what they committed more than two months
ago as fluently as they did at the time they learned it. They are very
fond of the school & much enjoy to learn English. What the Lord
designs to do with them we know not yet we hope that he will
prepare some of them at least by his grace to preach his gospel to
their countrymen. They are most by the children of heathen parents, but
they have no objection to our teaching them the Christian religion.
Indeed the parents come with the children to attend our preaching on the
sabbath. We preach twice on the sabbath morn in our house & once
about two miles off, at another village. We also go from house to house
to tell the people of the love of God to sinners. We have also daily a concourse
of sick people who come to receive medical aid. This affords us an excellent
opportunity to tell them of the great Physician of soul & body. We have
here no European neighbor & no Christian friend nearer than the
fort of Jaffna which is about eight miles, except one of
descent born in this country of a Christian mother. She is a sitting
magistrate two miles from us, a well informed & most excellent
plains man. She is much respected by the natives. has much influ-
ence over them & has been of great service to us in collecting the people to-
gether to hear the word of God. Her heart is much engaged in the good
work of missions. The females are here in a most wretched state.
They are slaves to their husbands & are not permitted to come to meeting or to
see us when we call at their huts. We have been able to do away the
prejudices of some of the husbands so far as to have their wives come & sit in
a room by themselves to hear preaching. It after the birth of Mrs. Poore's little
daughter which is now a month old several of the women called in to see
her. The people are becoming more & more disposed to be familiar with us
& to hear us talk. Our prospects of doing good to this people are as great as we
could have expected. Brother Berdmore has gone to join our missionary brethren
at Bombay. Brother Richard & a Miss will settle in a parish about eight
miles from us. Their house will be prepared for them to move into in
a few days. There are two Wesleyan Missionaries residing at Jaffna fort
whom we esteem & love as dear fellow labourers in this great vineyard.
They are we believe the true disciples of Christ & earnestly labouring for
the salvation of their perishing pagans. There are ten Wesleyan brethren on
this Island with all of whom we have formed a pleasing acquaintance.
One of their number is now going to Madras on the coast to reside
for a time ^{the enough} by whom I send this letter. He is a most spiritual worthy man.
He regret his departure from our small circle of Christian friends.

ask shall we be so happy as meet again but I hope
Ourselves in having God & His Kingdom & but as it will be difficult to keep up our
treasures in heaven. Let us make our calling & election sure & then anxious
doubt in town will be diminished & as into the Kingdom of our Lord & Saviour
various occasions & other little I want to tell all our family. You will let Bob & Eliza know immediately
it is send it to Muddy & also write to our dear Sister & Dr. Gardner immediately
after you receive it. I often think of them in my best love to all my
friends & where I go I try to mention names & should not give names to their
Sister - Yours most affecly
Eliza & Warren



Received Sept 8. 1811

S.H.R.

P

Capt Samuel Warren
Marlborough
Massachusetts
U.S.A.

My health was never better than at present & never was more contented
& happy than in my present situation, I wish my parents friends & want
more grace & more humility - more & more love for the souls of thy people & more
thankless favours of God broad as all. I too often have & more than
ungrateful & unfeeling heart - If I could be more like the world &
other for God's vice & passion & I should be happy all
the day & sometimes cast a thought forward to solemn day of judgment
when the universe shall be assembled before the Judge of quick & dead
& when we shall account of we each other again -